



INSTRUCT-O-GRAM

THE HANDS-ON TRAINING GUIDE FOR THE FIRE INSTRUCTOR

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NFPA 1021 – An Officer's Guide (Part One)

TASK

The purpose of this month's *Instruct-O-Gram* is to provide fire service personnel with an understanding of the use and importance of the skill and knowledge components of being a fire service officer, as specified in **NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications**. This will be accomplished through the use of lecture and the attached checklist. We would also recommend that sufficient copies of the standard be made available so that students can perform required reading assignments.

INTRODUCTION

The students should have a basic understanding of their role in the fire department, and the role they are to play during all forms of suppression and station operations. They should also have a basic grounding in the need to understand why officers are required to fulfill an organization's mission and accomplish its goals and objectives. In order to

better participate in their role in the fire department, the students should have a basic understanding of what organizations are and how they personally fit into the overall scheme of fire department operations.

CLASS OUTLINE

The instructor will review the outline with the class. The instructor may wish to use examples, or call for examples from the students. The instructor may also wish to encourage brainstorming sessions to create an enthusiasm among the students.

1. What is NFPA 1021?
2. What is the history of this particular professional standard?
3. Chapter One – Administration

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Upon completion of this class, the student will be able to explain the purpose of NFPA 1021.

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2. Upon completion of this class, the student will be able to discuss the history of the NFPA 1021 standard.
3. Upon completion of this class, the student will be able to explain the concept of job performance requirements (JPR).
4. Upon completion of this class, the student will understand the administrative sections from NFPA 1021.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. Origins of the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations

The research for this class begins with a look at the creation of the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations (JCNFSO). This was an alliance of national-level fire service organizations created in 1970 to bring some order to the chaos that existed among the organizations at the time. It was decided by the constituent groups of the JCNFSO that a system of professional standards would be needed to improve the standing of the American Fire Service.

One of the original actions that occurred back in 1971 was the creation of a National Professional Qualifications Board (NPQB). This allowed the fire service to develop performance standards for uniformed fire service personnel. It was decided that these standards would be of greater assistance if they were located within the technical committee structure of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

2. The History of NFPA 1021

On December 14, 1972, the NFPA Board of Directors established four technical committees to develop standards using the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards-making system. The initial committees addressed the following career areas: fire fighter, fire officer, fire service instructor, and fire inspector and investigator. These committees met during the years 1973-1975.

NFPA reports that the first edition of NFPA 1021 was approved at the May 1976 Annual Meeting, and was adopted by the Association in July 1976. Over the years, the committee has met on a regular basis to review, revise and update the standard. Updated editions of this standard were adopted under the auspices of the NPQB in 1983 and 1987.

According to the NFPA, "... the original concept of the professional qualification standards, as directed by the JCNFSO and the NPQB, was to develop an interrelated set of performance standards specifically for the fire service. The various levels of achievement in the standards were to build on each other within a strictly defined career ladder."

In the late 1980s, it was determined by NFPA that future revisions of the standards should be able to stand on their own merit in terms of job performance requirements for a given field. They NFPA goes on to state that, "... the strict career ladder

concept was abandoned, except for the progression from fire fighter to fire officer. The later revisions, therefore, facilitated the use of the documents by fields other than the uniformed fire services.”

The appointment of professional qualifications committees and the development of the professional qualifications standards were assumed by the NFPA itself in 1990. At that point the NFPA Standards Council appointed a Correlating Committee on Professional Qualifications. Through this action, they assumed the responsibility for coordinating the requirements of all of the professional qualifications documents.

It is important to note that the 1992 edition of NFPA 1021 reduced the number of levels for fire officers in the standard to four. The 1997 edition of NFPA 1021 converted to the job performance requirement (JPR) format in order to be in line with the other personnel standards. According to the standard, “... each JPR consists of the task to be performed; the tools, equipment, or materials that must be provided to successfully complete the task; evaluation parameters and/or performance outcomes; and lists of prerequisite knowledge and skills one must have to be able to perform the task.

3. Chapter One – Administration (All comments are from NFPA 1021, 1997 Edition)

1-1 Scope

This standard identifies the performance requirements necessary to perform the

duties of a fire officer and specifically identifies four levels of progression.

1-2 Purpose.

The purpose of this standard is to specify the minimum job performance requirements for service as a fire officer.

1-2.1

The intent of the standard is to define progressive levels of performance required at the various levels of officer responsibility. The authority having jurisdiction has the option to combine or group the levels to meet its local needs and to use them in the development of job descriptions and specifying promotional standards.

1-2.2

It is not the intent of this standard to restrict any jurisdiction from exceeding these minimum requirements.

1-2.3

This standard shall cover the requirements for the four levels of progression—Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, Fire Officer III, and Fire Officer IV.

1-3 General

1-3.1

All of the standards for any level of fire officer shall be performed in accordance with recognized practices and procedures or as defined by an accepted authority.

1-3.2

It is not required for the objectives to be mastered in the order in which they appear. The local or state/provincial training program shall establish both the instructional priority and the program content to prepare individuals to meet the performance objectives of this standard.

1-3.3

The Fire Fighter II shall meet all the objectives for Fire Officer I before being certified at the Fire Officer I level, and the objectives for each succeeding level in the progression shall be met before being certified at the next higher level."

SUMMARY

In this month's edition we have presented the first in a series of *Instruct-O-Grams* that will assist

you in understanding the National Fire Protection Association's Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications. We would urge you to retain all of these editions in your training files, in order to allow for the orderly delivery of officer's training. We urge you to conduct a complete review of this standard prior to conducting any classroom sessions.

Acknowledgement

This Instruct-O-Gram was created by Dr. Harry R. Carter, MIFireE, a municipal fire protection consultant from Adelphia, New Jersey. Dr. Carter is a former President of ISFSI.

Instructor and Student Reference

NFPA 1021 – Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications (1997 Edition)

The Instruct-O-Gram is the monthly training outline of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI). The monthly Instruct-O-Gram is provided as one of the benefits of membership in ISFSI.

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